

a many-splendored thing

by TolkienGirl

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Summary: Love. It is all at once, everything and nothing like what you expect. (ClaireDevil. Poetry intermingled.)

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\*\*A/N: Wrote this poem tonight, and had to write a fic to go with it.  
Hope you enjoy.\*\*

\_love

>it trails in after dark, an empty steed<em>

This is how Claire knows she's in danger of falling in love with him: every time he calls, or tumbles through her window intoxicated by blood and pain and bittersweet wine that he lifts to his lips and calls justiceâ€”every time, she hears her heart quicken.

It's not just the adrenaline; she's a nurse. She knows what that would sound like.

The trouble is, she knows he can hear it too.

\_love

>it rains from heaven, as if heaven bleeds<em>

This is how she knows he might be in danger, too: he kisses her. He kisses tenderly. His knuckles are split and she has heard, has felt it in her bones when his voice rasped low and deadly. She has seen him rain down blows upon the wicked.

But his lips are soft and his hands are gentle.

The trouble is, she should not love both sides of him.

\_love

>it's not the story told,<br>(the words it skirts)\_

This is how she knows it's gone too far: she thinks of him as hers. Her martyr. Her Matt. It's only a moment here or there, a memory. Onlyâ€"but all too much. Claire flattens her lips into a hard line and charts out a patient's meds. She runs a hand through her hair and she wants so badly to go home.

The trouble is, she wants Matt too, these days.

\_love

>it never quite grows old<br>(that is, too old to hurt)\_

This is how she knows he's past saving: he takes so many sins upon him that he calls himself the Devil.

He's not, he's not. He may not be a saint, but he is a martyr. She thinks that counts. And he smiles like a little boy and throws himself like a spear, straight to the heart of the rotten city. There's only so many times he can keep his aim true. There's only so many times she can be there when he needs her.

He does need her, and she needs him. Somehow, along the way, that happened.

The trouble is, she knows it cannot last.

\_love

>it can be mine though I'm not yours<br>and I'm not yours, I'm sure, I'm sure, I'm sure\_

This is how she knows she must leave him: she does not want to.

He says her name like a prayer. Claire. It means light, and she wonders if that means something more to a man who can't see. It cuts her to the bone, to the heart, to take that away from him.

But she has to. She is not a martyr. Not yet. And there is only room on the cross for one.

The trouble is, you cannot really leave someone you still love. They follow after, always and forever, like wine gone bittersweet on the tongue.

End  
file.